

REMARKS

The Final Office Action dated April 17, 2008 has been received and its contents carefully noted. Claims 1-4 and 6-11 were pending. Claims 10 and 11 have been withdrawn as being directed to a non-elected invention. Claims 1-4 and 6-9 are rejected. New claims 12 and 13 are added.

Applicants would like to express their gratitude to Examiner Kackar for his courtesy shown to Applicants' representatives during the telephonic after-final interviews held on July 16, 2008 and July 24, 2008. Applicants were pleased to learn that Examiner Kackar had participated in proposing claim amendments to achieve allowance of the rejected claims.

During the After-Final interviews, Applicants' representatives explained that neither Yoshida, nor Yoshida in view of Tsunehiko, discloses the claimed features of previously amended claim 1 submitted October 25, 2007. In particular, the combined references do not teach or suggest "a second groove formed in a part of a portion, opposing the flanged part, of the lower surface of the substrate holding table, whereby the flanged part is joined to the lower surface of the substrate holding table at an outermost annular area of an upper surface of the flanged part, while a remaining area of the upper surface of the flanged part located radially inside the outermost annular area is separated from the substrate holding part by a space provided by the second groove opposing the flanged part". Examiner Kackar expressed understanding of the language but countered with a suggestion that claim 1 be amended further to incorporate description of Applicants' curved transition part, R2, that joins the support column, 23A, to the flanged part, 23B. See the exemplary embodiment of Fig. 7; see also paragraphs 6 and 52.

In view of the After-Final Interviews, Claim 1 has been amended pursuant to Examiner Kackar's proposal in order to more clearly distinguish the claimed invention over the asserted art. Amended claim 1 thus recites "the outer surface of the support column having a curvilinear outer surface at a transition part from the support column to the flanged part. Neither Yoshida nor Yoshida in view of Tsunehiko teaches or suggests Applicants' overall substrate holding structure now as set forth in amended claim 1. Applicants thereby traverse all of the rejections to claims 1-4 and 6-9 (rejection of claims 1-4 and 8-9 over Yoshida and Yoshida in view of Tsunehiko; rejection of claim 4 over Yoshida in view of Goto et al; rejection of claim 6 over Yoshida in view of Watanabe; rejection of claim 7 over Yoshida in view of Watanabe as applied

to claim 6 and further in view of Nagasaki) as provided in the Office Action dated April 17, 2008. As such, Applicants respectfully urge withdrawal and reconsideration of each rejection.

New claims 12 and 13 also patentably distinguish from the asserted art. Independent claim 12 more succinctly describes Applicants' holding structure. With reference to Applicants' arrangement shown in Fig. 7, claim 12 recites the U-shaped groove (23U) as circumferentially outside the flanged part (23B), and the second groove (232) in direct opposition to the flanged part. That is, the second groove is directly above the flange to provide an area of separation or "space" between the table lower surface and the flange upper surface (234). This structure is not taught or suggested by the art.

The Examiner's conclusion that Yoshida teaches a groove either circumferentially outside a flange (e.g., Fig. 5), or circumferentially inside the flange (e.g., Fig. 4) is not disputed. Applicants' understand, but do not concede, the Examiner's position that Yoshida therefore also teaches a holder structure with two grooves, one concentrically inside and one concentrically outside the flange. However, to those of ordinary skill in the art, Yoshida's Figs. 4 and 6 clearly teach the grooves as either outside the periphery of the flange, or inside the flange, but not directly opposed to the flange. Thus, Yoshida can not teach or suggest Applicants' second groove formed between the flange and table in order to create space there between as provided in new claim 12. For at least these reasons, new claim 12, and new claim 13 dependent thereon, likewise are submitted as patentable over Yoshida and the asserted secondary art. Allowance of these two claims also is solicited.

CONCLUSION

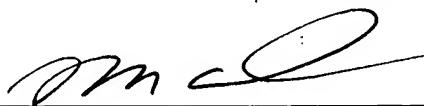
All of the stated grounds of rejections have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Therefore it is respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for all allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

It is not believed that extensions of time are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in accompanying documents. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to prevent abandonment of this application, then such extensions of time are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. 1.136(a), and any fees required therefore are hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 02-4300, Attorney Docket No. 033082M301.

Respectfully submitted,

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